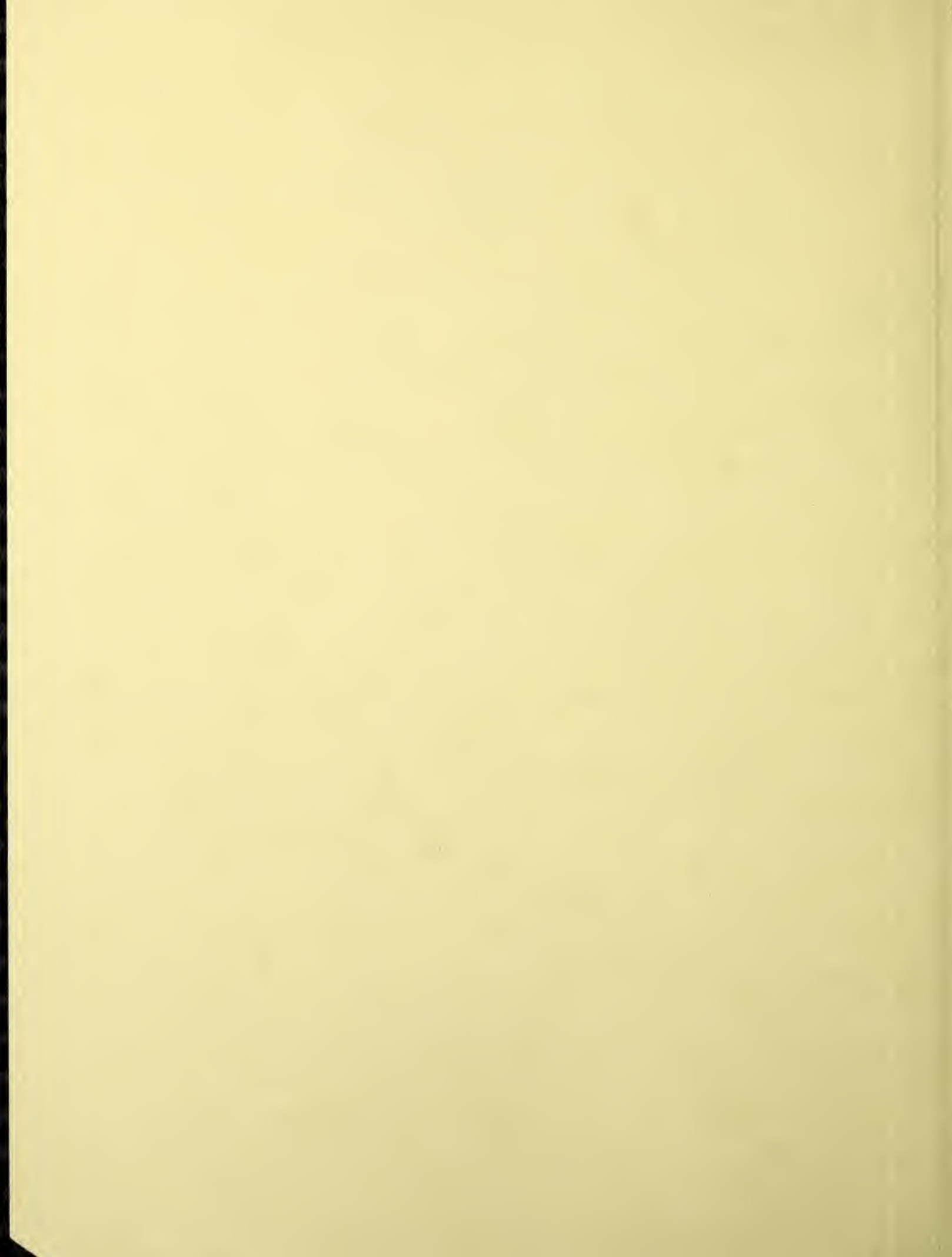


TITTLE, WALTER
(ARTIST)

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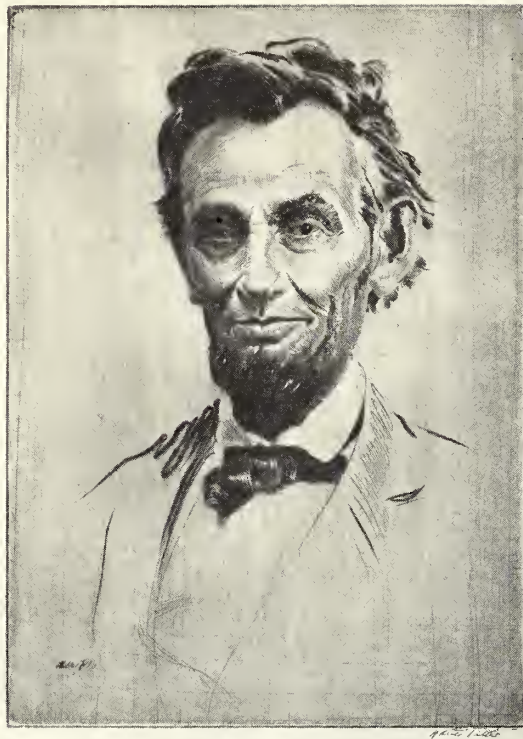
Artists of Abraham Lincoln portraits

Walter Tittle

Excerpts from newspapers and other
sources

From the files of the
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

AT
GOODSPEED'S




ABRAHAM LINCOLN

BY WALTER TITTLE

Etching, 14 by 10 inches, \$36

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PRINTS

Edited by WILLIAM SALISBURY

BI-MONTHLY—EXCEPT JULY-AUGUST

Devoted primarily, though not exclusively, to the work of American Artists

WALTER TITTLE AND HIS DRYPOINTS

By Malcolm C. Salaman

WHY BURTON EMMETT COLLECTS

By B. F. Morrow

A NOTE ON THE WHITNEY MUSEUM PRINTS

By Elisabeth Luther Cary

THE BI-CENTENNIAL PRINTS

By Harry A. Ogden

THE PUTNAM REMBRANDTS GIVEN TO BROOKLYN

By Susan A. Hutchinson

BOOKS AND OTHER THINGS

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September, 1932

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WALTER TITTLE AND HIS DRYPOINTS

By MALCOLM C. SALAMAN

HOW MANY AMERICAN artists make their way to Paris in the first glow of their enthusiasm, as if it were the very Mecca of art, and then extend their journey through France, and seek picturesque places in Italy or Spain, painting, drawing or etching as if that particular part of the world were about to be overthrown and re-invented on the newest scale of modernity; yet how few of these artists ever attain anything of a European reputation!

One of the few is Walter Tittle, though he attained it, not by etching familiar or little-known places, but by recording what he saw in the faces of celebrated men. Vivid portraits in drypoint of the twenty-five leading delegates to the Conference on the Limitation of Armaments, which had drawn the eagerly watching eyes of the world to Washington in the winter of 1921-2, were the principal feature of the exhibition in 1923 at the Leicester Galleries, which introduced Walter Tittle to London. The artist, though well known in America as an illustrator for magazines, and a painter of portraiture, was quite unknown to English connoisseurs, but his unusual flair for the living likeness was readily perceived by critical eyes, and it was seen that the official portraitist had justified the acumen of the American selectors. In his few well-chosen lines, he had managed to give the essential character of each of his noted sitters, as he had conceived them. There was the individual life in each, something arresting in the personality; in certain members this was, of course, less noticeable, though all were remarkable, but in those who had something vital to urge, with a commanding power to carry their ideas through, the artist had shown in his subject the subtle intelligence and will. Aristide Briand, Lord Balfour, President Harding, Lord Beatty, Lord Cavan, Lord Lee of Fareham, Chief Justice Hughes, Marquis Visconti Venosta, Prince

Tokugawa and Baron Kato of Japan, and the rest of the delegates from all the participating, peace-desiring countries—here was a world of personalities, in which the mind worked in its own way to its purpose, and the artist was quick to perceive and delineate the mentality playing in the features.

This was to be seen in the Memorial Portfolio, which is preserved, together with a deal more of the artist's work, in the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, as well as in many leading public and private collections in America. The exhibition at the Leicester Galleries was therefore a great test, and Walter Tittle came through it with *éclat*. Henceforth he was looked upon as an artist working with the great physiognomies of the world as his proper material. There was, for instance, the brilliant Briand, whose death all the nationalities have been lately lamenting, to whose word on universal affairs they had all been eagerly listening, knowing that his wise thought was always measured by his witty tongue. Now that his work is done, we may look at Walter Tittle's portrait of him in drypoint, and read in the face the delightfully great man that Briand was. It was with this portrait I introduced the artist to print lovers in the 1923 issue of *Fine Prints of the Year*, while Mr. Campbell Dodgson lent his favour and great authority to an article on the artist's peculiar talent for portraiture.

Walter Tittle, who was born at Springfield, Ohio, on October 9th, 1883, began his artistic career in 1902 under the inspiring teaching of Robert Henri, the painter, whose works, influenced by his studies in France, Italy and Spain, with a character of their own, are in most of the leading American galleries. This genial artist had a great and beneficial influence on Tittle who, when he began to use the drypoint in 1917, made a life-like study of the master, whose quiet humour, expressed in his mobile features, and his sensitive hand, showed at once the way in which the artist was going to develop. His lines were to the purpose, but they were very supple, and they were definite in their suggestion of the man.

Having done his portrait series for the Conference, Walter Tittle went to Paris, and there, on September 22, 1922, Briand signed his portrayal, and at the home of J. L. Forain, the expert American etcher was made happy by a sitting from the great French artist. By this time, Forain had practically achieved all his artistic aims—his bitterly sarcastic, though not less amusing, bourgeois drawings for the illustrated papers, his wonderful series of etchings, those, I mean,

that began in 1908, including the very human legal and social subjects, the remarkable plates illustrating the immortal tragedy of Christ, and the never-to-be-forgotten Lourdes series, together with the paintings which, even though the great Degas had been his teacher, were profoundly original. So Tittle, knowing this silent avowal of the master's career, and realizing that there were no further graphic worlds for the artist to conquer, set to work on his copper, to show what Forain looked like when his mind and his hands were at rest. Those sensitive hands, that had worked so feverishly in the olden days to catch the public eye in the popular press, were now resting forward, the one hanging over the back of a chair, while the remarkable face, with its protruding nose and set mouth, looked through severe eyes that seemed to see a puzzled past. In this happy portrait we see the best of the artist's way, for his copper is controlled with spontaneity; yet his sensitive mind keeps constant touch with his fluent drypoint.

In 1924 Walter Tittle, who was then busy making portrait drawings with the lithograph crayon of most of the interesting artists and writers in England, happened to meet Joseph Conrad, and arranged to spend the week-end at his house at Bishopsbourne in Kent, for the purpose of a portrait. It was promptly done, and was one of the most successful of the series. This was followed by other portraits of Conrad, including two fine studies in oils, one of which has been acquired by the National Portrait Gallery in London, so that the face of the Polish author, who wrote his masterpieces in English, became one of the most familiar in Walter Tittle's range of acquaintances. And now, when Conrad is no longer alive, the artist holds him still in vivid memory, and has done on a smaller scale another portrait, giving the features in front view, so that the author seems yet living as we knew him.

George Bernard Shaw has also been a favorite subject of Tittle. He has painted two portraits of the genial writer's features, in which the mobile character of the man is bountifully revealed. Shaw seemed to enjoy these sittings, to which he lent what was required of his personality without stint. Then, there were drypoint studies, in which the earliest reflected more of the man's genial nature, as I remember it many years ago, though the last is perhaps more technically laudable, yet does it not hide the easy laughter of the true George Bernard Shaw? Then, there was a fresh presentation of Mr. Epstein, the great sculptor, who is always disturbing the wits of the easy public by



ELGIN MARBLES No. 2
Drypoint. Original size, $8\frac{3}{4} \times 15\frac{1}{2}$

showing a point of view that they had never been accustomed to, but which appealed to his artistic sense.

This was the second version of the portrait scheme of the sculptor, and it was on a small scale, but the remarkable likeness that Walter Tittle has lately issued of President Lincoln is on a much larger scale. It is a smiling portrait, the smile being one of peculiar sweetness, coming, as it were, from the man's greatness of soul; the eloquent eyes are alert with the gladness of memory, the mouth curls into pleasant reminiscence, which brightens the whole countenance. He beams for a moment, as if he has just spoken, after his second election to the presidency, his great inaugural speech. Is there anything more to wish for? Some forty odd portraits, all of the best, were lent to Mr. Tittle, for him to work from, and there is no doubt that his genius has helped him to produce a drypoint portrait of Abraham Lincoln that the world will care for in the future, not the portrait of a labelled hero, but of one who could not help being a great man, with the happy gift of appropriate laughter.

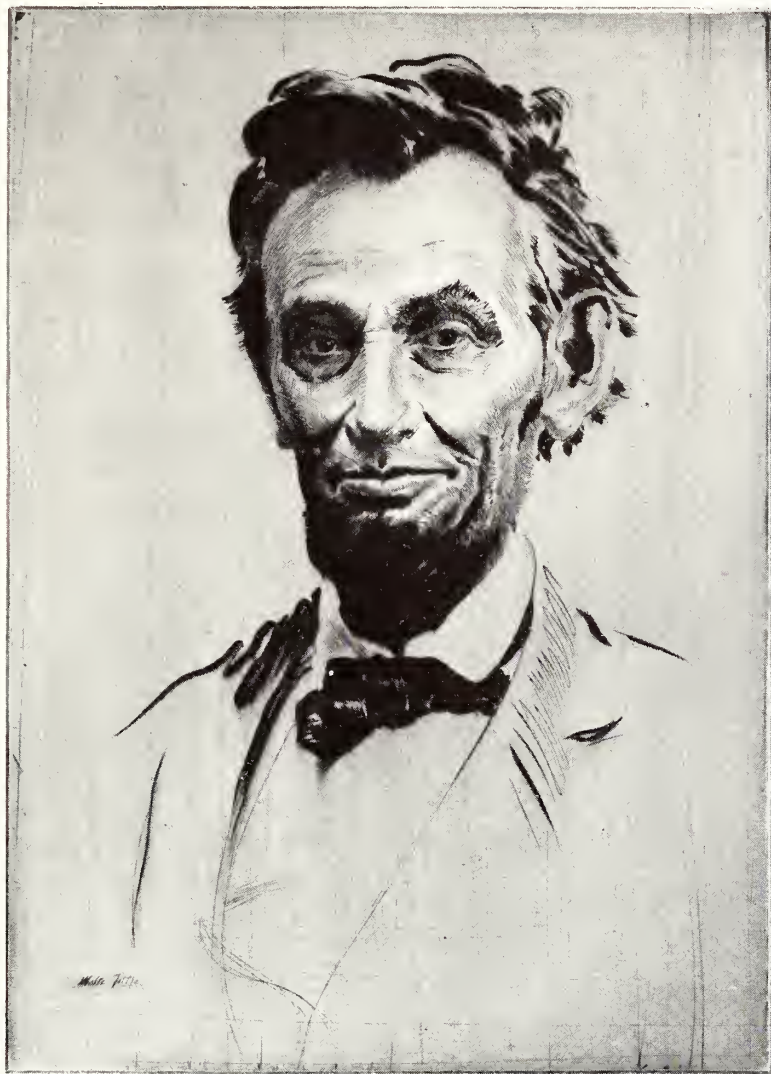
All of Walter Tittle's artistic interest has hitherto been practically in the expression of human character as it appeared to him in various forms, and his fortunate experiences have shown this to him in some of the forms most interesting in character and luminance. For the last four years, however, he has alternated his portraiture of human beings, celebrated or not, with the scenic illustration of noted places in, or around New York. Among his earlier works of this kind was his landscape etching of *The Country Club*, in which the house is away in the distance, while a charming growth of trees shadows the nearer pool. Then, drypoint in *The Plaza, Sunset Glow*, lets a curious effect of light play upon the buildings, and on the water of the lake, in which the reflections of the tower, and the lesser, but still mammoth, erections lie lightly.

Among the impressions of buildings he has wrought in his own way for his own pleasure, was *The Church of the Heavenly Rest*, drawn on a dark night, with lamps making weird reflections. This is a very impressive plate. Dark shadows have fallen on the sacred building, but the forms of the west front are partially lighted by the flare of a street lamp that stands at the corner, picking out the abutments that show on the side wall shadowed by the night. Lights are aflame in the windows of Madison Avenue, and wanderers in the street show that it is not heavenly rest they seek. Then there is *The Cathedral of St. John the Divine*, with the new building of the west front in



JOSEPH CONRAD

Drypoint. Original size, 11 x 6. Recently done from an oil painting by the artist, supplemented by sketches from life



LINCOLN

Drypoint. Original size, $13\frac{3}{4} \times 10$

progress. A huge elaboration of scaffolding is erected, the outer rim is boarded round, derricks, ropes and pulleys are at work, and people promenade, and some wheel their perambulators as unconcernedly as if the great work were finished, possibly without a thought of its worshipful intention.

Walter Tittle is absorbed by the contrasts of light under different circumstances. He has shown, in *Grand Central, Night, New York*, the electric illumination of the striking, noble exterior, the bridge, the broad roadway, with its tramway lines, and its automobiles, and the approach of the great hotel opposite, with the various degrees of light, such as those from the many windows overlooking the bright scene, half-way, as it were, between it and the dark sky. This is a very personal plate, rich in its various suggestions of artificial light and real darkness; so also is *Manhattan Minarets*. Here is the huge New York Central building, brilliantly illuminated by the fierce light fixed by its apex, and all the luminants in its myriad windows, the tall Chrysler building, standing out against the dark sky, like a huge shimmering spectre, and beyond is the Chanin building with its top-most stories wreathed in a blaze of light, and to look at these amazing sights a young man has come out upon the corner height of a building, and he sits there, lost in the strange and glittering wonder of what he sees. Two lighted coils of smoke are playing from great chimneys, while below, apparently, the roadway is a blaze of light. It is a plate of interesting contrasts.

Now, it was probably the skill displayed in these plates, apart from the personal message of the portraits, which prompted Sir Joseph Duveen to seek Walter Tittle's aid in artistically commemorating the substantial and generous gifts he was making to the British nation. This promised to be a work after Tittle's heart, and he undertook it with enthusiasm. Certainly his drypoint has never served him better, for he revelled in representing the primitive pictures in the National Gallery in the room designed for them, with its long ranged and rounded ceiling, each picture in its place looking like a jewelled thing upon the walls. Then at the Tate Gallery he drew the Sargent room, in which the treasured pictures of the American master are preserved, and he made it, with his black and grey tones, so charmingly and appropriately graduated in their formal conceptions, with the white standing firmly in its places, so that the room looks as if the very spirit of the painter were enshrined there. It is no wonder that the National Arts Club of New York awarded this print the arts

almost double the size of the existing premises, and will be seen before long, and the re-decorations and the re-hanging of the Wallace collection, which has been one of Sir Joseph's little pleasures, his great ambition lies in a most sumptuous project for housing the Elgin Marbles. These will be placed in a new and important wing of the British Museum, a project which is growing in his active brain, and the generous plans are far advanced, with the idea of making a harmonious and permanent setting for this treasury of great and deathless memorials.

Walter Tittle has been engaged in this scheme, in so far as the Elgin Marbles themselves are concerned, having employed his dry-point, in close communion with his feeling for beauty, in giving graphic life to some of these immortal stones. Their broken shapes do not suggest mutilation, but merely old, old age, in which the dry-point plays its part like a trusty servant. In the two plates given here, the familiar forms reveal themselves in a style suggestive of themselves, for Tittle has worked his drypoint in a manner of closer and more exquisite finish than he did even in his latest portraits. Yet the artist is the same, there is no material change, the portraits of Briand and Forain, of Shaw and Conrad, have all the touch of life in their own way, and Walter Tittle's renderings of the Elgin Marbles are wrought equally with the same touch. And who shall deny the suggestion of life to the lovely stateliness of the Caryatid?

*

THE LAST OF THE MAURERS

Louis Maurer died in June, four months past the age of 100. The survivor and one of the best of the group of Currier & Ives artists, was too ill to attend a dinner which Harry T. Peters would have given for him on his last birthday, February 21st, and he had been very feeble for six months. But on his ninety-ninth birthday he had drawn on a menu card for Mr. Peters the excellent portrait of Davy Crockett which appeared in *PRINTS* of last January.

Within six weeks of his death his son Alfred H. Maurer, a painter who had won numerous honors and was represented in important public collections, hanged himself in the home in New York City where the family had resided for two generations. Alfred Maurer was sixty-four, and as long ago as 1901 had won first prize at the Carnegie International show. He had seen his father outlive all the relatives and friends and associates of the long period of his Currier & Ives days, and had watched with gloomy eyes the wasting away of his noted parent, and his melancholy increased after the funeral. Did he fear that he, too, might live to be 100?



ALFRED FOWLER

FINE PRINTS

1244 Martha Custis Drive,
Alexandria, Virginia

Lincoln National Life Foundation,
Fort Wayne, Indiana

Dear Sirs:

Quite a while ago, just before I entered the Army, I received an inquiry from your office concerning fine prints. I presume you are still interested in them, and as I am now out of the Army and have engaged in the business of handling rare etchings, engravings, etc., I write to offer an item in which I think you may be particularly interested.

The item is an etched portrait of Lincoln, measuring 14 inches in height by 10 inches in width, made by Walter Tittle, N.A., who is one of the more important contemporary American etchers.

The story of the portrait, as Mr. Tittle tells it, is of considerable interest. He writes: "My portrait of Lincoln has been a source of satisfaction to me because I succeeded in representing him much in the spirit of my very reverent conception of him. In my mind he has a niche not very far from the one occupied by Saint Francis; both it seems to me were saints and both extremely human. Here in brief is a little account of how I happened to produce this plate.

"I suppose it must be thirty years ago that I first had a desire to make a portrait of Lincoln. I began collecting likenesses of him, and had only a few in my little collection when the New York Times came out, about twenty years ago, with a number of reproductions of Lincoln portraits in a Lincoln's birthday issue. On the front cover of the Times Magazine that week appeared one of the Brady plates taken a week before Lincoln died, one that had never before been reproduced. The reason for this was that the plate had been broken, but for the first time, the two pieces had been put together and the result reproduced.

"This photograph seemed to me to have a greater spiritual content than any other I had ever seen. I made up my mind to draw most heavily upon it for my own conception of Lincoln. I was extremely busy with commissions at that time, and some years passed before I did anything about it. But whenever I got a chance to add another Lincoln likeness to my collection, I did it.

"At last, the desire to make the plate came strong enough to put the impulse over the top, and this coincided with my discovery of the fact that my old friends, Charles Scribners Sons, for whom I had drawn many illustrations and had even done some writing for their magazine, possessed the finest collection of Lincoln portraits extant. The chief rival of the Scribner collection was owned by the McClure Publishing Company. When McClure finally went out of business, Scribners acquired their collection of Lincoln portraits to add to their own.

"When I asked if it would be possible for me to borrow a few of the photographs from their collection, they brought out the vast array - or rather, their art editor Joe Chapin did - and told me to take the lot home with me if I desired. Instead I chose about forty, the reason for this being that those last Brady photographs had not been too well exposed and were lacking very much in the feeling of bone structure, and form and modelling generally. These lacking elements I was able to find in abundant degree in many other photographs. I used no reproductions of paintings whatever. I wanted the facts and not another artist's conception. From these I made a drawing on which I worked very hard, and from that drawing, eventually, the plate. I have been given a great deal of pleasure by having been told that this is the best plate of Lincoln."

This portrait etching is priced at \$36.00, and it would be a pleasure to send it to you on approval if you would like to see it.

Anticipating the pleasure of hearing from you,

Very truly yours,

Alfred Fowler

January 8, 1946.

2-7- TITTLE Etching

January 16, 1946

Mr. Alfred Fowler
1244 Martha Custis Drive
Alexandria, Virginia

My dear Mr. Fowler:

It was very thoughtful of you to call to the attention of this Foundation the availability of the portrait etched by Walter Tittle.

Just at present we are placing more emphasis upon our library than on our art gallery and all funds available now seem to be assigned to this source. I regret indeed that we would not feel just at present like negotiating for the Tittle etching.

Very truly yours,

LAW:EB

Director

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TITLE, WALTER
(ARTIST)

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